

ACE EDUCATOR AWARDS 2016

Good evening everyone and welcome. I am Janet Mirsky, Treasurer of Greenbelt's Advisory Committee on Education (ACE). I'd like to thank Mayor Jordan and the City Council for once again sponsoring the ACE Educators Awards.

ACE inaugurated the Educators Awards in 1996, making this year the 21st consecutive year of the awards. This record is a testament to the Council's continued and energetic support of our schools and education. Before I call up the awardees, I'd like to make a few remarks and a number of introductions.

The purpose of ACE is to serve as a link between the Community and the City Council, addressing educational issues and promoting high quality schools for the people of Greenbelt. ACE was formed in 1994 and its charter was revised in 2007. It works with the City Council, school principals and their PTSAs to address educational issues and policies that affect the people of Greenbelt.

Some of the things that ACE has been working on this year include:

- * Organizing ACE Science and Reading clubs hosted by three of our Greenbelt schools.
- * Running the ACE Grants-To-Schools program, which funded 21 programs this year totaling just under \$9,700.
- * ACE also had an annual meeting with school Principals and another meeting with Parent Teacher Organization Presidents.
- * We have a meeting with the facilitators of the ACE clubs later this month.

Tonight we are happy to present our ACE Educator Awards to recognize school-based adults who have made an exceptional contribution to the schools that Greenbelt children attend. While many of the ACE outstanding educators are teachers, we all know that many individuals contribute to the positive school experience of Greenbelt students. Because of this, a recipient may be any dedicated, capable member of the school team. This includes a teacher, a guidance counselor, other professional staff member, support staff or building staff. ACE selects the awardees based on nominations from each school's administration.

The ACE Educator Awards complement the ACE Student Awards, which we will present to deserving Greenbelt students at the City Council session on Monday, May 23rd. Together, these awards spotlight the exemplary educational programs of the schools that Greenbelt children attend, and the people who make it happen.

Each Educator Award winner will receive a number of gifts and certificates to commemorate his or her success. From ACE, we have an engraved red and gold apple, the apple being of course, the well-recognized symbol of education. We also have an ACE tee shirt, which we invite all award winners to wear with us during the Labor Day Festival Parade in September. There are also certificates of recognition from the City, the County, and the State.

I'd now like to make a few introductions. We are pleased to have in the audience tonight a number of dignitaries. In addition to the Greenbelt City Council, we have School Board Member Lupi Grady here with us this evening. We are pleased to have our representative on the Prince George's County Council, Todd Turner here with us this evening. State Senator Pinsky; and State Delegates Anne Healey, Tawanna Gaines, and Alonzo Washington will not be able to join us this evening but they have generously sent citations recognizing the ACE Educator Awardees on behalf of the state of Maryland. Mr. Joe Schlosnagle will be presenting the citations on their behalf.

I would also like to ask any school administrators who are here this evening to stand and be recognized: Greenbelt Elementary, Springhill Lake Elementary, Magnolia Elementary, Turning Point Academy, Dora Kennedy French Immersion School, Greenbelt Middle School and Eleanor Roosevelt High School.

I think it is also important to thank all of the family members, school staff and parent-teacher organization members who are here to support the awardees. The success of each of us is dependent on the help and support that we receive from family and team members.

I would like to now introduce the members of Greenbelt's Advisory Committee on Education. Each of them has contributed to tonight's event and to all ACE activities. The members are Susan Breon, Chair of ACE and liaison to Eleanor Roosevelt High School; Jon Gardner, liaison to Eleanor Roosevelt High School and member in charge of the ACE Grants Program; Sudhanshu Sinha, liaison to Springhill Lake Elementary; Veronica Martin-Alston, liaison to Greenbelt Middle School; Melinda Brady, ACE member responsible for interfacing with the PGCPs School Board and other outside organizations. Melinda will be joining me tonight to make our Educator Award presentations.

Don Rich, liaison to Magnolia Elementary; Elsie Waynes, liaison to Turning Point Academy; Kate McElhenny, who recently joined ACE and will take over the role of liaison to Greenbelt Elementary; and Ema Smith, liaison from the Youth Advisory Committee to ACE. Ema is not here tonight. And I am Janet Mirsky, Treasurer of ACE and liaison to Dora Kennedy French Immersion School.

As a final introduction, I'd like to recognize the following two people who support ACE: Leta Mach, ACE's City Council liaison and Rosalind Ceasar, the City's staff liaison to ACE, who does a marvelous job keeping the committee on track. I ask that City Council and our distinguished guests, arrange yourselves in a semi-circle in front.

Now, on to the introduction of this year's ACE Educator Awardees. When I call your name, please come and stand beside me while I describe your contributions to your school. When I finish, you will have the opportunity to say a few words yourself. One of the dignitaries who has a certificate will read it. Each proclamation will be read just once to avoid unnecessary repetition. However, rest assured, the proclamations apply to each and every one of you. After the proclamation is read, please make your way around the circle, shaking hands and receiving your gifts and certificates. After you make your way around the circle, we will ask that all of your family, friends, and co-workers stand to receive recognition. You may then return to your seat.

After all Awards have been made, we ask the awardees and elected officials to come up front for pictures. We also ask each of the Award winners to provide us with contact information, if you did not already do so when you arrived, so that we can formally invite you to walk with ACE in the 2016 Labor Day Festival Parade.

The order of presentation will be Greenbelt Elementary, Springhill Lake Elementary, Magnolia Elementary, Turning Point Academy, Dora Kennedy French Immersion, Greenbelt Middle, and Eleanor Roosevelt High School.

Our first ACE Educator Award goes to **Ms. Angela Payne of Greenbelt Elementary School.**

Ms. Payne is very knowledgeable about current trends in Special Education. Her advice and perspective are sought throughout the Prince George's County School System by other Special Education teachers, due to her expertise and experience in both the instructional and legal aspects of Special Education. Often Ms. Payne's role is to educate parents and teachers about programs, processes, and interventions that will help young people transition from the elementary school environment to middle, high school, and college/career. In preparation for middle school Ms. Payne teaches students to take the initiative, speak on their own behalf, and set independent learning goals.

As a member of many Grade Level Teams, Ms. Payne commits to many extra hours and responsibilities in addition to her job as Special Education Coordinator for the school. Ms. Payne assists with grading, instructional planning, assessments, and grade level planning. She often stays late in the evenings planning school-wide events like Math Night, which benefits children and families at all grade levels. She also works together with the Fifth Grade Level Teams to plan field trips, fifth grade promotion, and fifth grade class special events. All of these extra-curricular activities provide opportunities for students to learn and socialize together – building healthy and positive relationships.

A parent has written that her son has become very fond of Ms. Payne and her name is commonly used at the dinner table when he talks about his school day, and naturally it is always positive. Ms. Payne takes the time to encourage and support this child and to make him feel special.

She also makes it a point to stay in constant contact with all parents and keep them informed of their children's progress. Another parent has written that Ms. Payne has been instrumental in keeping the lines of communication open among all the members of her son's IEP team, including his primary teacher, his occupational therapist, and his speech therapist. She believes it is this well-coordinated teamwork that has been fostered that is the primary reason he is now academically on par with the other children in his grade level and recently made Honor Roll.

Ms. Payne has provided a wonderful link between the general education class and the special education department. She is proficient in documenting her students' progress. Ms. Payne has the temperament, motivation and desire to succeed in any endeavor she undertakes. Ms. Payne has made a commitment to public education. As a result, hundreds of students have benefitted from her expertise and enthusiasm. For these reasons and others too numerous to mention, Ms. Angela Payne is recognized as the ACE Educator of the Year for Greenbelt Elementary School. Will Ms. Payne's family, friends, and supporters please stand.

Our ACE Educator Award for **Springhill Lake Elementary School goes to Ms. Lindsay Romaine.**

Every educator draws from a taxonomy of descriptive traits that highlights their character. Several words come to our mind when we think about Ms. Lindsay Romaine—Distinguished, Extraordinary, Sterling, and Remarkable. Ms. Romaine joined the Springhill Lake Family in the 2013-2014 Academic School Year as a Kindergarten Teacher. Her service to our scholars has been par exceptional. At any time of the day, you will enter Ms. Romaine's classroom and see her students eagerly at work and enjoying their learning day.

Ms. Romaine currently serves as the Kindergarten Grade Level Chair. Her Leadership attributes allow for her team to meet and exceed learning expectations. Ms. Romaine employs a variety of approaches to clarify the intended objective/standards. She helps students in analyzing what is being asked of them and devises methods to help them utilize their skills and talents to master learning tasks. Because of her teaching, several of her former Kindergarten students have been identified this year as first grade TAG students. Ms. Romaine also serves as one of our Soaring Eagles Teachers working with Intermediate students. She ensures that they are putting all efforts forward to excel academically.

Ms. Lindsay Romaine is absolutely deserving of this prestigious recognition from Greenbelt ACE. It is our honor to have such a dedicated educator in our school community and ACE is happy to recognize her as an Outstanding Educator for 2016. I would like to invite Ms. Romaine to say a few words, and to be recognized by the City Council and other dignitaries. It takes a village to make a great teacher, so I would now like to invite Ms. Romaine's family, friends and supporters to please stand.

Next we have the award for **Magnolia Elementary School, which is presented to Ms. Leslie Tapscott-Mull.** Ms. Tapscott has been working in education for 16 years, has been a teacher at Magnolia for the past five years,

and is currently Reading Specialist and Testing Coordinator. She is an exceptional teacher who soars to the top on every occasion. Her profound concern for every student inspires their choices each day and she commits to doing everything her capabilities for the advancement of each student's knowledge and skills.

Students from Kindergarten through 6th grade are provided with the highest quality of intervention for remediation and enhancement of learning. There is superior use of technology, thereby developing learners who are in pulse with the latest trends of learning keys and menus. Ms. Tapscott's talent in story-telling allows anyone who hears her flawless and imaginative delivery of materials to feel the "coming to life" of every character, setting, and event in the story. In addition, with her extensive knowledge in areas of teaching and learning, she can answer just about every question with substantial explanation and examples.

Ms. Tapscott's active involvement also includes a number of leadership roles at Magnolia. She is Testing Coordinator and part of the Leadership Team. She created a Reading Club that entices students to develop their love of reading and helps them embrace the lessons that go with it. Ms. Tapscott is also an active proponent of the North Bay Project for 6th grade, which allows better opportunities to reach out and communicate with parents.

So with her unquestionable personal and professional ethics, Ms. Tapscott is a perfect model for other educators. Indeed, she is an extraordinary educator worthy to receive this ACE Educator Award. It is an extreme honour to salute Ms. Leslie Tapscott-Mull as Magnolia Elementary's 2016 ACE Awardee. I'd like to invite Ms. Tapscott's family, friends and supporters to please stand.

The outstanding educator award for **Turning Point Academy goes to Ms. Karen Thompson.** Ms. Thompson is a professional school counselor. She received a Bachelor's of Arts degree in Elementary Education from Bowie State University and a Master's in Educational Counseling from the University of Phoenix. Her educational career includes 20 years of counseling and teaching both elementary school and college level courses.

Ms. Thompson arrives to work with the same lovely smile and eagerness to serve every day. Her calm and friendly demeanor is an asset to the staff and student population. Often, Ms. Thompson remains at work beyond work hours, preparing for the next day's hectic responsibilities. She can be trusted to get the job done and done well.

Serving as the Student Government Association Coordinator, she works well with student leaders, while inspiring the remaining student population to be the best they can. Her favorite mantra, "I can. I will. End of story!" is often recited while teaching afternoon classes. It has been used by many of her students to remind themselves they too can do it, only if they believe...and try.

Ms. Thompson is diligent, dedicated, determined and down-right special and is truly appreciated for her outstanding service to Turning Point Academy. ACE would like to present the Educator Award for Turning Point Academy to Ms. Karen Thompson. I'd like to invite Ms. Thompson's family, friends and supporters to please stand.

The ACE Educator Award for **Dora Kennedy French Immersion School is presented to Ms. Belle Ange Mbaya.** Ms. Mbaya is chair of the Middle School Math Department, working with grades 6-8. She is also a National Board Certified Teacher. Ms. Mbaya instructs everyone in math. She tutors students, she provides professional development and training for staff members, and she runs math workshops for parents to empower them in helping their children to do homework assignments. This has enabled her to see outstanding results from her students.

Ms. Mbaya has an excellent rapport with her students, the staff, and the parents, and her classroom management skills are superior. ACE is pleased to present this year's Educator Award for the Dora Kennedy French Immersion School to Ms. Belle Ange Mbaya. I'd like to invite Ms. Mbaya's family, friends and supporters to please stand.

The ACE Educator Award for Greenbelt Middle School is presented to Ms. Shirley Guerrier.

Ms. Guerrier teaches 7th grade science at GMS. She has been at GMS for the last four years and during that time, she has consistently shown that students are her first priority. She motivates her charges with engaging lessons and they have responded by garnering the best results in the entire school. Her students have the highest GPAs, the best attendance and the fewest discipline issues. Her excellence in class led to her being assigned as a Grade Level Team Leader and under her leadership, her team has inspired their students to achieve higher GPAs, better attendance and fewer discipline issues than any other grade level at GMS.

Ms. Guerrier also works to provide excellent enrichment for students by sponsoring the Newspaper Club. ACE is very pleased to present the 2016 Educator Award for Greenbelt Middle School to Ms. Shirley Guerrier. I'd like to invite Ms. Guerrier's family, friends and supporters to please stand.

The final ACE Educator Award of the evening goes to Mr. Tetsuo Ogawa at Eleanor Roosevelt High School.

Mr. Ogawa has been a valued member of the Eleanor Roosevelt High School faculty for nine years. His positive attitude, love of the Japanese language and culture are reflected in the outstanding quality of instruction that he has maintained at Eleanor Roosevelt.

Through his enthusiasm, hard work and careful planning, Eleanor Roosevelt has won numerous awards for the Japanese program. He has expanded the cultural exchange program to include a STEM-focused school exchange with another school in Japan. Students are able to collaborate on important projects facing our society. A special highlight of the program was meeting Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and President Barack Obama at the White House last spring.

His innovativeness and his genuine concerns for children are exemplary. Mr. Ogawa's flexibility in working with students, teachers and the public has earned him an enviable reputation throughout the district as an excellent teacher.

Mr. Ogawa demonstrates the highest level of professional commitment and competency in his work with students and colleagues. He is presently the department chairperson for our World Language program and generously shares his valuable time with staff and students. In addition to his schedule at Eleanor Roosevelt, Mr. Ogawa teaches at one of the local universities. ACE is happy to announce Mr. Tetsuo Ogawa as the Eleanor Roosevelt High School ACE Educator of the Year!

I would like to invite Mr. Ogawa's family, friends, and supporters to please stand.

Thank you all for helping us to recognize our award winners this evening. From elementary school to high school, we see that Greenbelt educators are doing truly wonderful things. The members of ACE feel privileged to be working with these outstanding educators to help make Greenbelt schools great.

I'd like to remind the award winners to come up now for a group photo with all our participating dignitaries. The rest of you should please finish the cookies and snacks on your way out!